

19 May 2014

Ben Wright Smith awarded Nashville residency

Melbourne folk rock musician Ben Wright Smith will spend three months in the United States later this year as part of the Australia Council's Nashville Songwriter Residency.

Australia Council Director Music Paul Mason said the Nashville residency, now in its second year, would include mentoring by one of Australia's most successful producers.

"Nashville is a major music town with a songwriting culture that goes beyond any specific style," Mr Mason said.

"Australian producer Mark Moffatt is hugely respected both here and in Nashville where he is now based. To have him on board as a mentor and facilitator makes this a very powerful opportunity."

Mr Mason said the residency was open to all songwriters and this year attracted many high quality applications.

"The aim of the residency is to enable songwriters to develop their writing skills, build creative and business networks and connect with other artists to co-write and collaborate," Mr Mason said.

"Ben is an impressive songwriter. He has already made some connections in Nashville and his application had a clear plan outlining how he would use the three months residency.

"His plan includes collaborating with other artists and producers on his unrecorded material, working on his third album, and strengthening his connections in Nashville."

Mark Moffatt said Nashville continued to lead the way as America's primary writing and recording centre across many genres.

"I was thrilled to hear Ben's music, as he is a perfect fit for the burgeoning Nashville pop/rock scene and I feel certain that he will be warmly embraced by that community," Mr Moffatt said.

"I look forward to helping him settle in to the vibrant writing, performing and recording world we have here."

Ben said he was very excited about receiving the residency and was looking forward to meeting and working with key people in Nashville who could help him further his songwriting and recording career.

"I feel really humbled and lucky to be receiving such a great opportunity," Ben said.

"I'm excited about going back to Nashville, but to be recording with Mark is insane.

"I think *The Saints* was one of the first albums I listened to, thanks to my uncle who got me onto that stuff.

"There's always so much music going on in Nashville, so I imagine I'll be on my feet quite a bit trying to catch everything in town."

Before Ben leaves for Nashville he and his band will launch their debut 7" *In Parallel* on Saturday, 28 June at Boney on Little Collins Street, Melbourne.

The Nashville Songwriter Residency provides up to \$15,000 to cover transport, accommodation and living costs.

The Australia Council has previously awarded the residency to Chris Altmann (SA) and Travis Caudle (WA).

ABOUT BEN WRIGHT SMITH

Ben Wright Smith is a 25-year-old folk rock musician from Melbourne.

In 2011 he has released his debut album *Autumn Safari* and travelled internationally to write and perform in places such as Los Angeles, Havana, New York and Mumbai.

In 2012 Ben went to Nashville where he performed at the Americana Music Festival alongside musicians such as Kasey Chambers and Justin Townes Earle.

Ben has spent the past year writing, recording, and playing shows with acts such as Ash Grunwald, D.D. DUMBO, Holy Holy, Rat & Co and Bertie Blackman, and releasing music from his upcoming 7" *In Parallel*.

The first single, *If Living The Good Life Is Easy (Why Is This So Hard?)*, released late last year, was co-produced with fellow Melbournian Oscar Dawson (HOLY HOLY, Ali Barter) and mixed and mastered by Andrei Eremin (Chet Faker).

The song's music video was shot on location in Blairgowrie, Victoria by Charlie Ford and Josh McKie (Vance Joy and Courtney Barnett).

The second single, *Fictional* received local and nationwide radio play and was also added to the feature play list on Triple J Unearthed.

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